

# DECENTRALISATION OF FEDERAL SYSTEMS IN FORESTS AND NATIONAL FORESTRY PROGRAMME: THE CASE OF GHANA

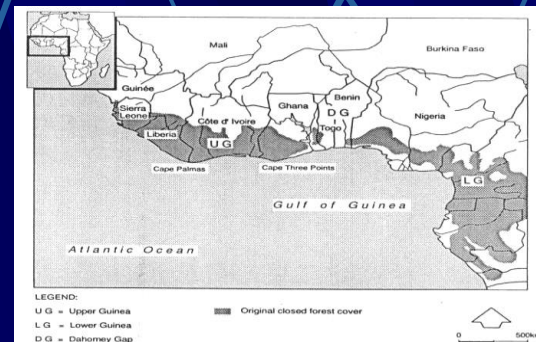


BY

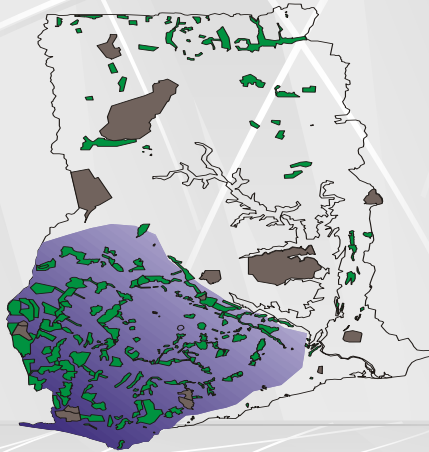
**OPPON SASU**

FOREST SERVICES DIVISION,  
GHANA

## MAP OF WEST AFRICA SHOWING STUDY AREAS/COUNTRIES



Map of Ghana showing forest zones and reserves



Green - Forestry Department reserves  
Brown - Ghana Wildlife Department reserves  
Blue - Limit of High Forest (shading indicates rainfall gradient)

## GHANA FORESTRY STATISTICS

- Permanent Forest Estate in High Forest Zone = 204 forest reserves with a total area of 1.62 million ha.
- Permanent Forest Estate in the Savanna Zone = 62 forest reserves with a total area of 0.60 million ha.
- Forestry Sector accounts for 6% of GDP
- Timber harvest per annum is 3.7 million m<sup>3</sup>
- Timber industry provides direct employment for 100,000 people and indirect employment for over 2.5 million people
- Installed capacity of timber industry is 5.2 million m<sup>3</sup> (almost 2.6 times the annual allowable cut)

## Historical Perspective Of National Decentralisation Programme

- **1878**  
**Purpose** Local Government introduced by Colonial Gov't  
Provide legal basis for Chiefs to carry out some limited local government functions
- **1940**  
**Purpose** Modification of Local Government functions empowering Traditional Authorities to support Colonial policies.
- **1957**  
Independence – Immediate introduction of state control over governance
- **1965**  
Strong central administration from the Office of the President
- **1972**  
Introduction of four-tier system of local governance - Regional, District, Local and Village Councils

## Historical Perspective Of National Decentralisation Programme (Cont.)

- **1982**  
Legal and administrative backing in place to make District Councils made main focus of Local Governance
- **1988**  
**Purpose** Enactment of Local Gov't. Law (PNDCL 207)  
Devolution of power, competence and resources to District level  
Ministeries, Depts. (MDAs) initiate actions to decentralise their operations to districts
- **2003**  
**Purpose** 3-year National Decentralisation Plan Developed  
To ensure effective participation of Civil Society in the decentralisation and governance process.

## **OUTSTANDING ISSUES ON NATIONAL DECENTRALISATION**

- Developing the capacity of Sector Ministries to transfer power and functions to decentralised institutions
- Outline nature and scope of the change entailed in decentralisation.
- Enacting legislation to clarify the function and related powers to be exercised by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) at the various levels of the decentralised system.
- Resolving the outstanding difficulties created by the establishment of sector public services for forestry, health and education with respect to many of the key functions that have been identified for decentralisation.

## **OVERVIEW OF FORESTRY SECTOR DECENTRALISATION**

- Up until the late 1990's, local communities and other stakeholders were barely involved in forest management
- In 1995 a collaborative forest management programme initiated on a pilot basis
- Since 2000 shifted from a government-led system to a civil society-government collaborative management approach.
- Weakness of the forestry decentralisation process is that it has in the past been driven by the Forestry Commission, which set its own benchmarks for decentralisation.
- Forestry decentralisation has not resulted in efficient resource utilisation due to the fact that it has not been accompanied by empowerment and capacity building of the communities to effectively manage the resources.

## **OUTSTANDING ISSUES ON FORESTRY DECENTRALISATION**

- Removal of policy and legislative constraints associated with the distribution and or sharing of forest revenue, resource allocation
- Strengthening resource ownership, rights to participation and rights of access to services
- Increasing local community participation in decision-making process
- Taking local community domestic needs and aspirations into consideration in the formulation of policy and management schemes for their forests.

## **TRANSITIONAL ISSUES AND CHANGES RESULTING FROM DECENTRALISATION**

### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- District Assembly Common Fund has been set up - 7% of the total revenue  
Development projects more geared towards community needs since involved in decision-making
- significant impacts of decentralisation on control of wildfire and prevention of deforestation and illegalities, largely because of greater participation of local communities in such programmes.

## **TRANSITIONAL ISSUES AND CHANGES RESULTING FROM DECENTRALISATION (CONT.)**

### **CONSTRIANTS**

- Revenue generating sectors of the economy (forestry, mining etc.) have still not been decentralised
- Both Government and the Forestry Commission are apprehensive in letting go of financial and administrative control, which has been one of the major reasons for the lack of sustainable impacts of the decentralisation process
- logging companies have begun complaining that landowners and forest-fringe communities have become more aggressive in ensuring that their rights are met, and in some cases made excessive demands, which have in some instances stalled their operations.

## **Key lessons and pointers for the future**

- For the decentralisation process to be successful:
  - it should be community-driven, flexible and transparent.
  - local community and civil society capacity to support the system needs to be built
  - empower communities and guarantee their rights to equitable benefit-sharing
- In-spite of their perceived weaknesses, customary tenurial systems and institutions are more able to ensure accountability to local communities and villagers than the state resource management machinery.

## **Key lessons and pointers for the future (Cont.)**

- commitment of development partners influences the degree of success. The decentralisation process has achieved its greatest gains where development partners have allowed the process to be country-led, albeit the programme has proceeded slowly
- The premise for the development of structures at the decentralised levels of government is that effective institutional and organisational development is about good governance, control and communication, and performance.
- realised that good governance, especially transparency and equitable share of resources and benefits, are far more critical to the well-being of local communities, and seems to be a catalyst for poverty reduction.

